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Letter to the Editor

Journal impact factor



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 October 2015

Accepted 25 December 2015

Available online 9 August 2016

Dear sir,

The correspondence and its subsequent Letter to the editor regarding Impact factor (IF) was read with interest [1,2]. In order to stop misuse of impact factor, following approach can be used. Instead of dividing the number of citations received by number of citable articles in the past two years, the number of citations received should be divided by the number of cited articles in the past year. Non cited articles should not be used in calculating impact factor.

Abolishing Journal self citation or author self citation or limiting the number of citations per article is not recommended. When good quality citable articles are present in the journal itself, or when the author has previously published quality papers on the subject, self citation cannot by itself be considered as a type of misuse. A good quality article will always receive numerous citations and hence it's not logical to assign a limit to citations per article. Assigning a limit to citations per article will defeat the very purpose of IF.

Also it was reported that journals are increasingly misusing review articles in lieu of research articles to increase IF. It should be remembered that review articles are not inferior to original articles. In fact the very foundation of every original article depends on review articles. Scientifically thinking review articles are part and parcel of good science. It should be kept in mind that a good review article or an original article will eventually be accepted by suitable journals depending on its merit and will be cited according to its quality. It is likely that if the quality of review article is not good, it will not be cited. Hence publishing review articles should necessarily not be related to misuse of impact factor.

Every journal metric system has its own advantages and disadvantages. However just because there are some possible fallacies IF should not be considered imperfect. Impact factor if modified as described above may possibly lead to healthy competition among journals and promote development of good science and literature.

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Peer review under responsibility of Chang Gung University.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bj.2015.12.001>

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